**Bullying in Schools: What you Need to Know**

There are many ways to hurt another human being. And there are some people—students you may know—who try their best to do just that. These kids are bullies, and each day they behave in ways that cause deep and lasting pain to others.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly one-third of middle and school students have experienced some kind of bullying. While this problem is more common among boys, about 1 in 4 girls from this same age group reports at least one encounter with a bully. What this means is that in a classroom of 20 students, at least 5 people—and most likely more—have had to deal with bullies. Chances are, if you have not experienced one already, you probably will.

Bullying is not a new problem. Almost as long as there have been schools, there have been stories about students teasing and humiliating each other. On any given school day, approximately 160,000 kids decide to skip school to avoid being picked on by their peers.

There is no simple reason to explain why certain people become bullies. Research has shown that kids with aggressive or impulsive personalities are more likely to turn into bullies. Physical size, especially among boys, can contribute to this problem, allowing bigger aggressive children to dominate their small peers.

Environmental factors can influence bullying. Poor adult supervision in schools and communities increases the likelihood that bullying will take place. In addition, schools which lack violence-prevention programs or that do not deal effectively with bully-related incidents are more likely to experience bullying problems. Bullies thrive in environments where they are not held accountable for their behavior.